



Biological Objectives for California Streams

Summary of CEQA Scoping
Meetings - September 2012

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What is CEQA Scoping?

- California Environmental Quality Act Scoping is:
 - A forum for early public input
 - Required for projects of statewide, regional, or area-wide significance (PRC § 21083)
 - Designed to solicit comments on the scope of the prospective environmental analysis
 - Designed to reveal any significant and potentially significant impacts
- No Action will be taken by the State Water Board



Scoping Questions

- Should the State develop a statewide biological objective?
- Are there additional alternatives staff should consider?
- What, if any, adverse environmental effects result from implementing the proposed alternatives?



Why propose a biological objectives policy?

- Streams are degraded
- Mechanisms for protecting streams are limited
- Mechanisms for restoring streams are limited
- Biological monitoring data are not assessed consistently statewide
- Regional Water Boards need measurable, enforceable biological thresholds

Policy Goals

- Formally adopt biological assessment methods and thresholds for assessing attainment of aquatic life beneficial uses
- Establish a consistent, statewide framework for interpreting biological data
- Establish policy for identifying and protecting high quality streams
- Set reasonable expectations for modified streams
- Institute policy with statewide consistency AND regional flexibility



Policy Alternatives



Alternative 1 – No Action



Alternative 2

Establish Biological Objectives to Maintain Condition in High Quality Streams & Prevent Further Degradation in Degraded Streams



Alternative 3

Adopt Biological Objectives for Protecting and Restoring California Streams



Additional Regulatory Tools to be Considered

- Apply existing Basin Plan narrative objectives
- New statewide plan
- New statewide policy for water quality control



Next Steps

- Scoping comments due **Friday, October 19, 2012**
- Work on draft policy & staff report – first half of 2013
- Public draft - second half of 2013
- Public workshops - 1st quarter 2014
- First adoption hearing - summer 2014